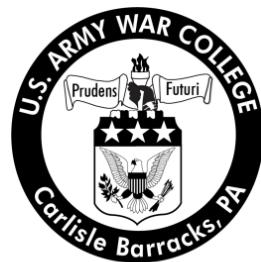


Strategy Research Project

National Guard Senior Leader Development: A New Set of Tricks

by

Lieutenant Colonel Glen D. Chancellor
Army National Guard



United States Army War College
Class of 2012

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT: A

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.

1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 15-03-2012		2. REPORT TYPE Strategy Research Project		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE National Guard Senior Leader Development: A New Set of Tricks				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Lieutenant Colonel Glen Chancellor				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Colonel Carol Eggert Department of Military Strategy, Planning, and Operations				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College 122 Forbes Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Approved for public release distribution is unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT While the Army and Air Force components in the National Guard incorporate the parent services' established senior leader development strategies, the National Guard lacks a cohesive strategy that incorporates the parents' strategies with the distinctive requirements of National Guard strategic leaders to develop tomorrow's strategic leaders and critical thinkers. The National Guard needs these leaders who will be the components' advocates advising the parent services and civilian leadership in the unique capabilities offered by the nation's only dual-mission military service. This paper examines strategic leader competencies required of future senior officers who will be charged with addressing the wicked challenges that the Nation and the National Guard will face in 2020, the National Guard's current senior development processes juxtaposed to the parent services' strategies, identify any shortfalls in senior leader preparation strategy and execution, and then discuss potential options to mitigate any shortcomings in preparing National Guard leaders for strategic and national level positions.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Reserve Component, Human Capital Strategy					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UNLIMITED	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 30	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED					19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)
c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED					

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

NATIONAL GUARD SENIOR LEADER DEVELOPMENT: A NEW SET OF TRICKS

by

Lieutenant Colonel Glen D. Chancellor
Army National Guard

Colonel Carol A. Eggert
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel Glen D. Chancellor

TITLE: National Guard Senior Leader Development: A New Set of Tricks

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 15 March 2012 WORD COUNT: 6,155 PAGES: 30

KEY TERMS: Reserve Component, Human Capital Strategy

CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

While the Army and Air Force components in the National Guard incorporate the parent services' established senior leader development strategies, the National Guard lacks a cohesive strategy that incorporates the parents' strategies with the distinctive requirements of National Guard strategic leaders to develop tomorrow's strategic leaders and critical thinkers. The National Guard needs these leaders who will be the components' advocates advising the parent services and civilian leadership in the unique capabilities offered by the nation's only dual-mission military service. This paper examines strategic leader competencies required of future senior officers who will be charged with addressing the wicked challenges that the Nation and the National Guard will face in 2020, the National Guard's current senior development processes juxtaposed to the parent services' strategies, identify any shortfalls in senior leader preparation strategy and execution, and then discuss potential options to mitigate any shortcomings in preparing National Guard leaders for strategic and national level positions.

NATIONAL GUARD SENIOR LEADER DEVELOPMENT: A NEW SET OF TRICKS

It became clear to me that at the age of 58 I would have to learn new tricks that were not taught in the military manuals or on the battlefield. In this position I am a political soldier and will have to put my training in rapping-out orders and making snap decisions on the back burner, and have to learn the arts of persuasion and guile. I must become an expert in a whole new set of skills.

—George C. Marshall

The former Chief of Staff of the Army, General George C. Marshall, encapsulated the challenges officers have in bridging their experience at the tactical and operational levels to working in a complex strategic environment. He understood the need to develop a different set of skills to succeed at the national strategic level that opened a leader's aperture to understand the broader range of organizations input to multifaceted problems to provide practicable solutions. Furthermore, Marshall recognized that the experiences and education that one mastered to succeed at the lower levels were not sufficient to lead to success at the top. For this reason, the military services have to make conscious decisions to develop and shape officers to take charge and succeed at the strategic level.

Leader development scholars define strategic leadership as an individual's ability to anticipate challenges, envision ways to overcome the challenges, maintain the flexibility to execute different courses of action, think strategically to understand the impacts on systems of systems, and work with others to create viable solutions for the organization's future.¹ While the Army and Air Force components in the National Guard incorporate the parent services' established senior leader development strategies, the National Guard lacks a cohesive strategy that incorporates the parents' strategies with the distinctive requirements of National Guard strategic leaders to develop tomorrow's

strategic leaders and critical thinkers. The National Guard needs these leaders who will be the components' advocates advising the parent services and civilian leadership in the unique capabilities offered by the nation's only dual-mission military service. Because the National Guard habitually works in Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multi-national (JIIM) environments, the organization has an obligation to best prepare today's leaders to serve and excel in the strategy domain to ensure success in achieving National and State interests tomorrow.

This paper examines strategic leader competencies required of future senior officers who will be charged with addressing the wicked challenges that the Nation and the National Guard will face in 2020, the National Guard's current senior development processes juxtaposed to the parent services' strategies, identify any shortfalls in senior leader preparation strategy and execution, and then discuss potential options to mitigate any shortcomings in preparing National Guard leaders for strategic and national level positions.

Army General Martin E. Dempsey, while serving as the Army Chief of Staff, placed leader development as the top priority for the service and made necessary changes within the Army to rebalance the leader development pillars – training, education, and experiences. He made this decision to refocus the Army on leader development and to re-instill the belief that a military career is a profession requiring continuous learning, development, exposure, and broadening opportunities with the intent of guiding the service to shape and build the Joint Force of 2020.² The former acting Army National Guard Director, Major General Raymond W. Carpenter identified in his strategy for the Army National Guard that the component would refocus and

prioritize its efforts in developing leaders because the last ten years' operational tempo of fighting two wars forced professional development to take a subjacent position in priorities.³

Both Generals Dempsey and Carpenter understood the importance of investing in human capital to generate tomorrow's senior leaders who are ready to address the unimaginable challenges of the next decade. Through the right training, future leaders are exposed to complex and hybrid scenarios that familiarize them with techniques to address and adapt to future uncertainties. Advanced learning and education prepares the leader with the necessary tools to respond and adapt to formidable future challenges, while broadening experience potentially provides the leader with a reference bank of unconventional solutions to like problems previously solved or addressed.⁴

Although the military, regardless of service, has historically been adaptive and capable of adjusting to address complex and difficult issues, today's Service and Component leaders have the responsibility to provide the next cohort of strategic leaders with the experience and exposure to broadening and unfamiliar assignments and opportunities to better prepare for tomorrow's challenges. The Army's 21st Century Leader Development Strategy aims to develop leaders who understand the complexities of a given situation, act based on the understanding of the situation, continually assess the effects of the acts on the situation and adapt to mitigate or shape the changing environment, consolidate the tactical and operational opportunities to achieve strategic aims, and effectively transition from one form of an operation to another.⁵ Similarly, the Air Force strategic leader development strategy recognizes tactical and operational

expertise as a cornerstone of abilities to operate at the strategic level. The Air Force also recognizes the value in providing career-broadening opportunities to prepare a senior leader to perform well at a national level.⁶ Senior leaders gain these critical thinking skills through a variety of jobs, career broadening opportunities, and education that challenges one to rethink and reorganize thought processes and methods of addressing increasingly complex issues in vague and ambiguous environments that do not have textbook solutions.⁷ Because the parent services provide the Army National Guard (ARNG) and the Air National Guard (ANG) with the guidance and strategy to meet service-specific strategic leader responsibilities, the National Guard needs to provide the strategy, guidance, and means for National Guard leaders to acquire the distinct and unique knowledge, experience opportunities, and component-specific strategic leader competencies necessary for accomplishing their dual-mission roles and the Guard's strategic success.

The National Guard's contribution to national defense is a vital component to the National Security Strategy (NSS). As a member of the total force, the National Guard provides 33 percent of the Army strength⁸ and 19.5 percent of the Air Force strength⁹ at 12 percent of the total Army budget and 6 percent of the total Air Force budget.¹⁰ The National Guard has the dual responsibility to prepare for, deploy, and execute Title 10 missions in support of national interests and respond to Title 32 National, State, and Local emergencies as the Governors' military response unit. To ensure the National Guard is prepared for and trained to execute the assigned or directed missions, the leaders (similar to their parent services' leaders) must structure, resource, and train the force to meet current and future threats to national security and emergency responses

in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous (VUCA) environment. With the aim of accomplishing these missions, National Guard strategic leaders must possess competencies that enable them to align National Guard capabilities to the vicissitudes of threats and emergencies that this Nation and their respective States will face in the 21st century. In order to create a strategic leader development strategy, the National Guard has to identify and target requisite competencies that the strategic leader must possess to align the National Guard to the multifarious challenges faced in JIIM environments and how the competencies will enable alignment.

The RAND Corporation examined the Army's efforts to develop officers' capabilities for JIIM environments and identified the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for leaders to be successful. Their findings affirmed that an officer's success in a JIIM environment requires functional expertise developed through a breadth of operational assignments and broadening opportunities.¹¹ Although the study was limited in scope to the Army's active component and did not examine the reserve components, the report stated, ". . . it seems intuitively obvious that reserve component officers, particularly those in the National Guard, would bring more experience and thus perhaps better insight into the intergovernmental domain."¹² Rand concluded that the knowledge, skills and abilities required to succeed in the strategic environment included an understanding of international and nongovernmental organizations' capabilities, culture, and processes; knowledge and understanding of U.S. government strategy and policy; familiarity with strategic issues; exposure to and awareness of all military services' structure, processes, and culture; keen social perceptiveness; and flexibility to adapt to unfamiliar and changing environments.¹³

National Guard operations, especially over the past ten years, provided and will continue to provide today's National Guard company-grade and field-grade officers with the traits and experience that RAND identified for success at the strategic level. According to RAND, broadening experiences significantly contributed to success and competence in JIIM environments by forcing those working in the JIIM domain to deal with unfamiliar content and to build collaboration and cooperation from other individuals and agencies to successfully accomplish the mission.¹⁴ However, until recently, there has been little effort to standardize or map career paths within the National Guard to ensure tomorrow's senior leaders are exposed to and develop the necessary skills and abilities to ameliorate their future performance.

Strategic leader competencies are grouped into three categories: technical, conceptual, and interpersonal.¹⁵ National Guard's strategic leaders have the responsibility to align the component to the constantly changing VUCA environment using competencies from all three categories. Within the technical competency, the strategic leader must understand the United States Code relating to Title 10 (Federal) and Title 32 (State) responsibilities and appreciate the application of these laws relating to organizational systems and functional relationships that exist between the States, the National Guard Bureau, the Services, and the Local communities.¹⁶ An example of the involved military service authorities and statutes that National Guard senior leaders are required to understand and navigate range from Title 10, United States Code § 12301(a) full mobilization under federal authority to Title 32, United States Code § 502(f)(2) "operational" status serving under state authority, as well as Title 32, United States Code § 325(a)(2) dual status commander and *posse comitatus*.

Comprehending the interdependent relationship between Federal and State agencies and the functions the National Guard is statutorily obligated or limited to perform is important for a leader to understand in order to create the vision, provide advice, and manage change for the National Guard in the 21st century. The leader has to realize how the National Guard fits into the Department of Defense framework in supporting the NSS execution and how the organization implements the Governors' military response to natural and man-made disasters within legal limits. Moreover, the leader is obligated to not only recognize the national political influence in national security development, but must also appreciate and maneuver the State and local politics in support of the Governors' disaster response strategy as the National Guard will be the first, and in most cases the only military responder to rescue citizens, protect property and quell unrest in a Title 32 capacity.

In addition to achieving or attaining the technical competencies, the National Guard strategic leader has to master conceptual and interpersonal competencies, too. The salient conceptual competency for the strategic leader to master is the frame of reference development that one achieves over the course of a career through work experience, personal development, and professional education.¹⁷ The senior leader must be open to new experiences and input from others. While this may sound easy, in practice one can become narrowly focused and closed to ideas counter to preconceived notions as the leader matures in an organization, especially if the leader has not been exposed to an assortment of varied assignments that acquaint the officer to alternative perspectives, personalities, cultures, and divergent thinking models. Because National Guard senior leaders provide a different viewpoint to the development and

implementation of national and geo-political strategy, the Guardsman must understand and be exposed to other organizations' ideas and beliefs in order to understand personal biases and perceptions when providing worthy advice to wicked problem solutions.¹⁸

Another component for a good frame of reference is the ability to reflect on past experiences, lessons, and decisions. From tactical assignments as a rifle platoon leader conducting patrols and engaging civilians on the battlefield in Afghanistan to planning humanitarian assistance operations post Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans to strategic assignments formulating policy at the National Guard Bureau (NGB), the National Guard senior leader needs a breadth of experiences and environments to provide the relevant frame of reference. Through reflection, an individual should suspend assumptions in order to think more creatively about personal history, and to understand not only how the decision or experiences developed, but also to review past opportunities (whether expressed or avoided) that might have impacted the outcome and to seek different prospects for future like occasions.¹⁹ According to Henry Mintzberg, a prominent professor of management and strategy development, strategic thinking involves a synthesis of intuition and creativity.²⁰ Because intuition is a belief influenced by an individual's background and history,²¹ the leader who lacks a breadth of experiences and awareness of different practices will have limited intuition or beliefs to draw upon in providing the necessary vision to an organization or subordinates to develop answers to the wicked problems the organization faces at the strategic level. Leaders with limited exposure to different cultures, organizations, or systems face the

risk of becoming anchored to familiar experiences or systems, thereby inhibiting critical thinking or suspension of existing biases.

The last element in developing a good frame of reference is the comfort in dealing with abstract ideas and concepts.²² At the strategic level there are few problems that have the textbook solutions that leaders encountered at the tactical and operational levels. As platoon leaders and company commanders, most issues these junior leaders face have solutions available in field manuals or standard operating procedures. As the level of responsibility increases to the field grade officer level so does the complexity of challenges; however, many times there are basic rules and guidelines to offer the mid-grade leader in finding a course of action as long as the result meets the commander's intent, supports mission accomplishment, and is moral and ethical. When a senior leader enters the realm of strategic leadership there are few publications or clear cut alternatives to pursue in order to resolve the multifaceted challenges one encounters. Instead, the strategic level requires understanding the multiple sources of national guidance and applying critical thinking skills to address wicked problems. Unfortunately for the strategic leaders, all the easy trials are addressed at lower levels and the perplexing issues require senior leaders to engage using their vast experience to conquer. Senior leaders require repeated exposure to abstract ideas and concepts and mastering critical thinking skills in order to find the "least worst" resolution for the complex and difficult problems encountered at the strategic level and embrace the ambiguity and uncertainty the strategic level involves. Through continued exposure to abstract ideas and complex concepts, one expands the mind to manifest operating

outside of comfort levels and develops the agility to respond to crisis and challenging vague exigencies.

The final competency, and arguably the most important, for the strategic leader (especially at the national level) to apply are interpersonal and social skills.²³ Strategic leaders have to build consensus, persuade others, get what they desire (effort, resources, or decisions) from others, and negotiate for the best outcome to the task at hand.²⁴ Leaders at this level have no choice but to involve all stakeholders and seek input from various perspectives to provide amplitude of considerations in developing the maximum opportunity to solve the complex undertakings. Through collaboration, one develops solutions where all participants are included in brainstorming and decision-making processes, thereby obtaining incremental buy-in throughout the encounter. Not only does the problem-solver develop the best course of action, inclusion of and collaboration among interested parties likely produces fewer derailments or detractors when bidding for commitment. As part of the consensus building, the effective strategic leader possesses archetypal persuasion skills as many times they are required to work with individuals and organizations that are not in the military and not in the leaders' chain of command, service, or realm of direct influence. The effective strategic leader needs to uncover and understand other parties' interests to appreciate their desired end states in order to negotiate or compromise to a mutually beneficial solution in producing win-win solutions.

National Guard strategic leaders have the obligation to master understanding of organizational systems, functional relationships at the various levels of government, frame of reference development, and interpersonal skills to motivate and provide vision

to manage the change facing the Joint Force of 2020. Without a grounding of these basic competencies, the officer will struggle to lead the organization to manage the change and unimaginable challenges the National Guard is surely to face. To prepare today's operational and tactical leaders for tomorrow's strategic leadership positions tomorrow, the investment in well-rounded assignment experience as well as broadening educational opportunities is a must. If one doubts the value in developing omniscient strategic leaders in the future at the investment cost of extending today's operational talent to career-broadening opportunities versus short-term gain, simply ask if the National Guard can afford attenuated senior officers tomorrow. Is the risk worth the cost?

The National Guard's parent services, the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force, provide senior leader development strategies that the respective National Guard service components follow to ensure well-rounded, prepared leaders who are equipped to address strategic challenges. However, the National Guard offers unique capabilities and perspectives from local and State leader engagements that no other service can offer. Therefore, the National Guard senior leaders have the responsibility to advise and educate political and military leaders on the National Guard competencies to address varied complex issues like disaster response, civil support, and homeland defense that Governors call on the National Guard to support daily. Congress's placement of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau on the Joint Chiefs of Staff illustrates the need for National Guard leaders to comprehend and master the legislative process to garner resources and secure legislation advantageous to the National Guard, while achieving national interests.²⁵ To ensure National Guard senior officers are primed and ready to

advise our civilian leaders, the organization needs to create a complimentary National Guard specific senior leader development program focused on the unique laws, authorities, relationships, and environmental factors that are exclusive to the National Guard in order to augment the parent services' efforts and cultivate the panoptical leaders necessary at the National Guard strategic level.

Strategic leader development and implementation to groom National Guard officers into critical thinkers and leaders at the national level are not processes that happen by accident, rather a deliberate practice. Today, there is no comprehensive method or approach to shape and create a unified National Guard development process for the State-assigned (Title 32) officers in the fifty States, three Territories, and District of Columbia or for the Federal-assigned (Title 10) officers stationed worldwide. The present selection and assignment criteria does not intentionally place officers in broadening opportunities or provide a career path for positions of increasing difficulty in order to groom an accomplished and promising officer who is prepared to confront future complex challenges. Instead, there are fifty-five different perspectives, processes, and divergent approaches to create leaders all based on myopic disjointed perceptions and intentions related to leading at a local, operational level vice the national, strategic level.

Presently, the National Guard Bureau depends on the States' Adjutant Generals to produce a strategic leader candidate pool to fill the combatant command and national senior leader requirements; however, there is no designated or consistent methodology to identify and prepare those potential strategic leaders to manage change and lead at the national level. The relationship between the National Guard Bureau and the States

is interdependent and requires operating at both levels to understand the complexity of issues and functional relationships between the States, the National Guard Bureau, the Services, and the State/Local communities. Unfortunately, according to senior officials in the National Guard who preferred not to be attributed, internal State politics periodically hinder and obfuscate senior leader selection and development processes; selected Adjutant Generals, at times, overlook some of today's roseate junior leaders in favor of other leaders who are not as talented or do not have the requisite skills and experience, but maintain a preferred status with the decision maker.²⁶

An independent study of organizational politics in the National Guard determined that one in four of the study's respondents reported acting negatively when they believe career-enhancing opportunities and promotions are politically based.²⁷ The study suggests that the perception exists among National Guard members that alliance or favoritism, not merit, determines promotion and senior leader selection.²⁸ This type of selection process is too subjective and leads to suboptimal strategic leader selection, training, and placement processes. Not only is this strategic leader development process inferior to an objective, unbiased selection process, it is also counterproductive. Up and coming junior leaders subjected to favoritism, whether blatant or subtle, often become disenfranchised and either cease to perform at maximum potential or leave the service thereby denying the organization of its best talent.²⁹

The organization has the requirement to develop and implement a coherent plan and policy to select, train, and promote the National Guard's brightest officers to maximize their potential and prepare them for senior positions to address the challenges facing the Nation and the National Guard over the next ten to twenty years.

To do this, the plan has to identify the necessary traits, experiences, and education for strategic leaders; create a career path and broadening opportunities to groom and challenge these bright minds; and direct an objective process that promotes a *comme il faut* selection method while suppressing favoritism.

The Army's Training and Doctrine Command developed a Leader Development Strategy asserting that strategic leadership requires strategic vision and judgment.³⁰ To gain this vision and judgment, senior officers must understand strategic context and national security implications of the instruments of power, especially the use of military force as well as the complex operating environments that military forces find themselves engaged. Because the stakes are so high and the costs associated with blunders or mistakes are so great, there is no opportunity for on-the-job training once the service assigns a senior officer to a position requiring critical thinking at the strategic level.³¹ Today's subordinate leaders need experience and the exposure working with difficult and challenging strategic issues to develop their critical thinking skills, develop the ability to place problems and solutions in context, and use as baseline knowledge when faced with similar challenges in the future. To lead the transition to the National Guard of 2020, the component has the onus to manage talent by developing and empowering agile adaptive leaders. The method to accomplish this task is to better select, manage, and assign talent to provide broadening opportunities to prepare for future senior-level positions.

The overwhelming majorities of National Guard positions, approximately 99%, are assigned in the States and offer minimal exposure to national level strategic issues. Unfortunately, there are only several hundred opportunities at the national level or

combatant commands for Guardsmen to serve and develop the skills necessary to comprehend the complexities of strategic-level problems, decision-making, and problem-solving processes. While the National Guard end-strength hovers at 450,000 members, there is obviously a competition to select and assign the most promising officers to these enriching and broadening opportunities.

In an effort to provide a breadth of experiences to Title 32 Guardsmen, the National Guard Bureau developed a voluntary senior leader development program to create additional developmental opportunities for promising field grade officers to gain national and joint level experience. The Guardsmen may serve in a one-time occasional tour in a Title 10 Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) active duty status for thirty-six months and be assigned to a Joint Duty Assignment List (JDAL) position. As part of the broadening opportunity, the Title 32 officers get the opportunity to participate in higher headquarters functions, staffing processes, and coordinate with Combatant Commands, Department of Defense, and service headquarters. This initiative provides Title 32 Guardsmen with career development opportunities not available in the States, Territories, or District of Columbia to provide the frame of reference necessary for strategic leaders.³²

Conversely, the National Guard also conducts an exchange program to afford the Title 10 AGR officers with the exposure to State and Local issues not usually encountered at the national levels. The Title 10 officers are selected to conduct single tours of duty working in a State Joint Force Headquarters and gain the experience necessary to encounter operational issues and view the perspective of issues the States face prior to returning to the national level.³³ The valuable knowledge base

earned while serving in State leadership positions and staffs affords the National Guard officer an understanding of intergovernmental processes involved with State and Local issues and unique constitutional, political, and cultural context found in each State and Territory.³⁴ Upon returning to the NGB, the Joint Staff, or other national agencies, these astute leaders will have as a backdrop of understanding the valuable insight of operations at lower levels in the crafting of strategy, policy development, advice to civilian leaders and service chiefs, and management of the most vexing problems they will encounter.

Lieutenant General Clyde A. Vaughn, former Army National Guard Director, emphasized the importance of personal relationships and nuances of the fifty-four different constitutional documents in the different States and Territories when integrating policy, crafting strategy, and synchronizing activities among these intergovernmental agencies. He also emphasized the necessity for Guard leaders to comprehend National Guard capabilities and legal constraints when advising civil leaders while being cognizant of the “political overtones” potentially mistaken by civilian or local government organizations who may feel a National Guard commander is usurping their authorities when responding to a disaster. Successful Guard senior leaders require an understanding of the political implications when addressing challenges or crisis management, especially during disaster response efforts. National Guard officers have to be cognizant not to overstep or arrogate State authorities or slight State or Local officials while providing military support to the civilian authorities. To prepare to navigate trying situations and catastrophes, the military leaders have to understand their own strength, weaknesses, and limits of their military position.³⁵

The last decade's operational tempo and the excellence with which our force addressed the challenges came at a price; the National Guard, along with the other services, sacrificed leader mentoring, grooming, and professional development to accomplish innumerable missions.³⁶ This paradigm permeated all levels of the organization at the expense of tomorrow's senior leaders. States had to make the tough choices not to invest in tomorrow's leaders, rather focus on the upcoming deployments. This choice cost leaders the potential to maximize broadening opportunities; the organization jeopardized its future because it failed to effectively manage talent, inadequately provided officers with opportunities to expand their "horizons" and achieve their potential; and mortgaged the organization's future to meet current pressing needs. The National Guard has the devoir to reverse this short-sightedness, invest in the future, and maximize all human capital potential.

With the objective of using a cohesive selection and assignment process to cultivate future strategic leaders in order to create adaptive and agile senior officers to lead the National Guard in 2020 and beyond, the National Guard Bureau's General Officer Management Office (GOMO) developed a concept to manage talented officers who Adjutant Generals nominate as candidates to potentially serve in future three and four star billet positions at the highest levels of the National Guard. The National Guard General Officer Leader Development Council (GOLDC) intends to manage careers and experiences of National Guard general officers and colonels to increase the candidate pool of potential senior leaders to serve in National level positions. The council reviews candidates' scorecards that track and measure key assignments, education, joint experience, command, and broadening opportunities that are synonymous with the

parent services' Active Components general officer prerequisites. The NGB GOMO forecasts requirements and vacancies six to eight years in the future to ensure an adequate population of qualified, capable, and ready senior strategic leaders exist to fill key billets and lead the Guard in 2020.³⁷

However, the GOLDC is a voluntary program that relies on the Adjutant Generals to offer their senior talent for tracking and management at the National level. Not all States, Territories, and the District of Columbia will see the benefit in the GOLDC and may be unwilling to surrender control and career management of their senior officers to NGB. Because section eight of the U.S. Constitution preserves the rights of the States to organize, arm, and discipline the militia, Governors and Adjutant Generals maintain autonomy from the National Guard Bureau to appoint and train their ranks and leaders as they deem appropriate.³⁸ For this reason, and because the NGB is not a headquarters with tasking authority, the GOLDC remains a voluntary program with invitations to all 54 States, Territories, and the District.

Review of the National Guard's senior leader development strategy suggests three possible options for improving or adapting the Guard's process of generating and developing tomorrow's critical thinkers, all of which bear significant consequences for the National Guard.

OPTION I (Central Management). Similar to the Army's Human Resources Command, the National Guard Bureau develops a talent management division with the purpose of managing the careers of National Guard officers. The talent management assignment officers would develop career progression plans for all National Guard officers, regardless of State assignment or Federal assignment, to ensure career-

enhancing opportunities for all Guard leaders and development of “well-rounded” officers who are best-prepared for future strategic leader assignments.

This option requires the States’ Adjutant Generals to relinquish control of managing their own officers and trust NGB to shape and manage their intellectual talent. Although this option would best serve the National Guard, the Adjutant Generals will likely cite United States Code and the Constitution that reserves the officer selection, promotion, and assignment authorities to the Adjutant General; however, the Secretary of the Army prescribes the qualifications National Guard officers must achieve for the grade, branch, position, and type of unit or organization involved in the event the President mobilizes reserve component officers to federal service. Furthermore, the Departments of the Army and the Air Force have the legal authority under the Militia Act of 1903 to require National Guard units and members to conform to Regular Army and Air Force standards because the National Guard members serve in a dual status to the President of the United States for Federal matters and the Governors for State matters.³⁹

This option is divisive and risks alienating the National Guard from the parent services by coercing the States to conform to stricter standards, stripping the talent management responsibilities from the States, and the likely possibility of the Adjutant Generals attempting to rally Congress to separate the National Guard from the parent services, albeit unlikely Congress would approve. Additionally, this option requires a constitutional amendment as well as changes to laws that undoubtedly would have many opponents to change. Arguably, this approach counters the founding fathers intent of the militia and rights reserved to the States.

OPTION II (Co-Opt Committee). Similar to the GOLDC initiative, each Adjutant General nominates field grade officers for JIIM positions that serve as key development experiences in preparation for future strategic leader positions. National Guard Bureau regulates the committee with equal representation from the States' commands. A State may opt out of participation in this nomination process and subsequent oversight of the Title 32 Guardsmen; however, the State that opts out of the process abdicates any officer assignment or nomination to a senior or strategic leader position at the national or combatant command levels.

This option supports the career broadening opportunities required to groom adapt and agile leaders for future security challenges and provides greater predictability for the requisite assignment history and compulsory experiences necessary to develop critical thinkers. This option is risky because of prospective State exclusions from those Governors and Adjutant Generals who choose not to participate and potentially develop a cohort of strategic leaders lacking diversity because only those States that chose to participate will represent the National Guard at the highest levels.

OPTION III (Key Developmental Requirements). Although National Guard Officers are not required to comply with select Joint Officer Qualification requirements in the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves recommended a policy change incorporating similar Joint Professional Military Education and Joint Staff assignments as those required of Active Component officers. The intent of this recommendations was to encourage National Guard officers to seek and obtain the same enlightening opportunities as their Active Component peers⁴⁰ in addition to generating fresh

perspectives and innovative ideas in order to maintain a competitive advantage in future senior leader performance.

This option produces a self-regulating policy change that also affords the States' Adjutant Generals to maintain oversight of their talent management; supervise their officers' career development; and provide an opportunity for diverse representation of the 54 States, Territories, and the District of Columbia at the strategic level. By creating a benefit, reward, and selection process to develop leaders through broadening opportunities, the National Guard and the Department of Defense will cultivate the core competencies necessary to lead in a VUCA environment without the perception of coercion or exclusion through processes dictated by national agencies for which the States view as irrelevant when shaping tomorrow's strategists.

This option supports the National Guard's objective to select, groom, and assign the Army National Guard's talent while encouraging maximum participation among the 54 States, Territories, and the District of Columbia and the Adjutant Generals maintain oversight of their own officer talent. Exercising this option facilitates cooperation among all parties from the State, National Guard Bureau, and Services' perspectives while collaborating on senior leader development to the benefit of the organization at all levels. Furthermore, the opportunity exists to partner with the Adjutant General in developing talent and maintaining diversity within the Guard. While developing tomorrow's future strategic leaders, the National Guard aligns with the services active forces in creating leaders and advisers with skills on par with their sister components.

When General Dempsey assumed the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he challenged the services to look past current requirements and focus on the

Joint Force of 2020. In his memorandum to all the military services he espoused the commitment to developing a military that provides options to our national leaders to “remain immune from coercion.”⁴¹ The National Guard is a vital member of the nation’s defense and it has a commitment to develop the agile and adaptive leaders to lead the organization in facing future challenges and threats domestically and abroad. Because the National Guard has a dual responsibility to long-term investment in creating agile, adaptive and innovative leaders capable of adjusting and managing the force when federalized to defend the Nation and its interests and when answering the call as the Governors’ response to local emergencies and disasters, the stakes are doubled. In pursuing these objectives, the cooperation of National Guard Bureau and the representative broadening and enhancing development and selection program is absolutely essential.

While the National Guard has taken steps to improve senior leader development at the general officer ranks, there is more work to be done to prepare field grade officers for future leadership positions. The Guard needs to establish a developmental program to create a selection and grooming program that meets future human capital needs and expand the future general officer candidate pool, especially with the addition of the Chief of National Guard Bureau to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and four 3-star general officer billets in the National Guard.

Although there are ad hoc programs and incentives shape future strategic leaders, the organization has to choose or create an option to institute developmental opportunities within the National Guard to produce a pool of candidates who are diverse, creative, critical, and adaptive. Today’s strategic leader development is

unsustainable considering the expanded role the reserve components may be expected to perform in tomorrow's defense. Obviously the National Guard senior leader development program requires further study and examination to determine if the planned initiatives, such as the GOLDC, are successful and lead to developing the traits, experience, and qualities needed in the component's senior officers. However, prior to creating options to exercise oversight and management of talent, the Guard has to identify the critical experience, traits, enhancing opportunities, and education that are necessary to develop senior Guard leaders. While the GOLDC is a start to shape the general officer candidate pool, the initiative has to extend to senior field grade officers who have to think like, provide background information and context to, and advise the most senior officers.

Improving the way the National Guard develops and prepares senior leaders is critical to our national security and disaster response. Regardless of the method chosen, the National Guard has to devise a unified senior leader development program to insure tomorrow's most senior officers learn the "new tricks" and become experts in the new sets of skills that General Marshall articulated over 60 years ago.

Endnotes

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